

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Adult Entertainment Product Bill Moves Forward**

**Honolulu.** House Bill 2885 has passed out of the state legislature and awaits approval from Governor Linda Lingle. The measure, introduced by State Representative Mele Carroll, D-13<sup>th</sup> (Paia, Haiku, Huelo, Keana'e, Hana, Kaupo, Lana'i, Moloka'i, Kalaupapa & Kaho'olawe), puts more stringent restrictions upon the visibility and location of adult entertainment products being sold in stores. Under the new law, businesses would be required to obscure and segregate all pornographic merchandise from view both on and off of the premises. Those persons in violation face a \$100 fine.

Amy Neil, a single mother from Wailuku, played an integral part in bringing the matter to the attention of lawmakers. She said she was motivated to take action after following her son, 9-year-old Corey Sorenson, into a Maui shopping center novelty store last November. Lured by a bright, colorful and seemingly innocuous window display, Neil said she and her son were shopping for the boy's birthday present when they stumbled upon the store's wide selection of salacious merchandise. Sex toys, clothing branded with vulgarities, and other explicit materials clearly targeted for adults were conspicuously displayed along aisles crowded with youths.

After filing a complaint with the shopping center's management and getting no response, she brought the issue to the attention of local police. She said they had received complaints in the past but were surprised to hear how offensive the situation had become. A visit by police resulted in the rearrangement of merchandise, but it did little to mitigate the visibility of adult products once inside the store.

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"I was told that there wasn't much else anyone could do," said Neil. "Regulation regarding these kinds of products and the way they're displayed falls into a gray area that makes for some very relaxed enforcement."

House Bill 2885 seeks to reconcile such ambiguity by establishing concrete guidelines in determining whether an item is pornographic and mandating how such items are presented at a business open to the general public. To qualify as pornographic, the product would need to meet three criteria: the average person would find that it appeals to the prurient interest; it depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and taken as a whole, it lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific merit.

"Mature content already proliferates throughout today's media and entertainment outlets," said Representative Carroll, who was pleased with the passage of the bill and awaits the Governor's signing it into law. If we can limit kids' exposure to such open dissolution, even in seemingly inconsequential ways, I think it's a vast improvement on the quality of their upbringing."

While Neil is satisfied with the measure, she believes that an age restriction and a higher fine would make the legislation more effective at protecting kids from premature and unnecessary exposure to adult material.

"I'm thrilled that the issue is getting this kind of attention," said Neil. "Everyone has been extremely supportive, and I think awareness on the part of parents is most important. Many have no idea of the accessibility their children have in experiencing mature and vulgar content. You certainly don't expect to find it at your community shopping mall."

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